

□ 1214

Mr. ALTMIRE changed his vote from "aye" to "no."

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2761 and to insert extraneous material therein.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

#### TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE REVISION AND EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 660 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2761.

□ 1215

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2761) to extend the Terrorism Insurance Program of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes, with Mr. ISRAEL in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, this is a continuation of a program that the Congress adopted in one of the previous Congresses to provide insurance in case of a terrorist attack. We had, obviously, the terrible murderous attack on America in 2001.

Substantial damage was done. Obviously, the overwhelming cost of that was in the human lives caused by these murderers, but we also had property damage. And I believe that it is unrealistic to think, and in fact inappropriate to urge, that the private insurance market, which functions very well in this country and serves us well, that that ought to be used in response to terrorism. We bring a bill forward that would provide both for life and property insurance from the Federal Government worked out in various ways.

There are two arguments for continuing this on an ongoing basis. Everybody agrees that it needs to be ex-

tended for a while. Some have said phase it out, let the private market ultimately take it over. I believe there are two reasons why that is not a good idea.

First, virtually no entities that are in the private insurance market believe that the private market could handle this well. Not only do the insurers believe that, but the customers of the insurance believe it. And primarily, by the way, the customers here are commercial real estate developers. People who are going to build large commercial buildings with tens, hundreds of millions of dollars in construction costs cannot build without a bank loan, and the banks will not lend and would not be allowed to lend by the regulators without fully insuring against all risks, including the risks of the terrorism that we wish were not around but clearly still is.

We do not believe, based on extensive conversations with virtually everyone in the marketplace, that this will work. In fact, I submit for printing in the RECORD a letter from the head of Goldman Sachs in 2005, that very important financial institution, clearly an entity that knows a great deal about the market. And in 2005, only 2 years ago, after we had TRIA for a while and the question was coming up about whether or not to continue it, he wrote to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER), then Chair of the Capital Market Subcommittee, that:

"Current data suggests that reinsurance, and consequently insurance, participation in the terrorism insurance market will decline if the Federal backstop is left to expire.

"Some have suggested that private markets for terrorism can successfully utilize risk transfer mechanisms such as catastrophe bonds.

"There is no evidence to suggest that the rating agencies or capital markets investors will be able to quantify the risk."

And what he says is that he does not believe the market can do this.

THE GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP, INC.,

New York, NY, July 26, 2005.

Hon. RICHARD BAKER,

Chairman, Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises, House of Representatives, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On behalf of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm, I am writing to express my support for maintaining a federal terrorism insurance backstop.

The federal terrorism insurance program, enacted by the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (TRIA), has helped provide the underpinning to a robust economic recovery despite the ongoing threat of terrorism. Notwithstanding Treasury's conclusion that TRIA has achieved its original purpose, we are not aware of any meaningful evidence showing that private terrorism risk insurance or reinsurance markets have developed ample capacity to rationally price and insure against terrorism on a scale that would adequately protect our nation's economy. In fact, current data suggests that reinsurance, and consequently insurance, participation in

the terrorism insurance market likely will decline significantly if the federal terrorism insurance backstop is left to expire.

Some have suggested that private markets for terrorism risk can successfully utilize risk transfer mechanisms such as catastrophe bonds (CAT bonds) that transfer risk from insurers to capital markets. Such securitization vehicles, however, represent a minor percentage of the overall insurance market and have been used mainly for natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes. There is no evidence to suggest that the rating agencies or capital markets investors will be able to more effectively quantify the risk of terrorism than insurers or reinsurers. As such, CAT bonds and other risk transfer mechanisms are unlikely to offer, at this time, the broad capacity necessary to insure America's businesses, workers and property owners against the risk of terrorism.

With less than five months remaining in the current program, American businesses soon will be forced to compete for portions of a severely constrained private insurance market and risk the possibility of being left with inadequate levels of terrorism insurance. In short, we simply cannot afford to let the private sector be economically exposed.

I appreciate your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

HENRY M. PAULSON, Jr.,

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

The CEO of Goldman Sachs who signed this is a very distinguished expert, Henry M. Paulson, Jr. He is no longer the chief of Goldman Sachs; he is now the Secretary of the Treasury and has somewhat different views, but this is a letter that he sent in late July 2005.

So we don't think the market can handle it. But I want to argue that even if you thought the market could handle it, we shouldn't ask it to for this reason: If you insure against risk, you ultimately pass the costs along to the people who are at risk. Insurance allows you to spread that risk out among those who are at risk. But the more you are at risk, the more you pay in insurance.

If we were to adopt a purely market solution, that would mean that those parts of the country which were calculated to be likelier targets of terrorism would pay more. That is the insurance principle. If you are more likely to be the victim of terrorism, then you should pay more.

I do not think we should allow vicious fanatics who hate this country and seek to inflict severe physical damage on us to decide where it should be more expensive to do business in our country and where it should not. But if you use the private insurance mechanism, that is what you get.

There is another problem with the private insurance mechanism, not a problem, a good facet, that doesn't apply here. What you can do with private insurance is to say to these entities: You know what, if you lower your risk, we will lower your insurance costs. But people who have large office buildings cannot significantly lower their risk of being attacked by terrorists. If they could, we wouldn't want them to be. We wouldn't want people in